

UNL Forms Public Water Resources Advisory Panel

A recently formed 10-member panel will help provide state decision-makers with guidance on water research, education and outreach programs by the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

The Water Resources Advisory Panel will meet regularly to share their thoughts and opinions on water resources issues and to offer UNL advice and assistance, according to Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Harlan Vice Chancellor and NU Vice President John Owens.

Owens and UNL Vice Chancellor for Research Prem Paul extended invitations for the 10 to serve on the panel.

The goal of the panel is to guide UNL as it continues to invest in water research, education and outreach efforts, a letter to the panelists from Owens and Paul said.

The letter also said “Because of pressing issues such as persistent drought, competing water needs in Nebraska and between states, legal actions, declines in the Ogallala groundwater aquifer, and critical habitat needs, etc., the University recently has renewed and strengthened its engagement in water resources through the Water Resources Research Initiative (WRRI).”

A major goal of the WRRI is strengthening the University’s ties with state and federal agencies responsible for water resources in Nebraska, as well as with the natural resources districts, irrigation districts, agricultural business organizations and other with ties to Nebraska water issues.

UNL Water Center director and WRRI leader Kyle Hoagland said the panel would be a huge benefit to the entire state and to the University.

“It will increase UNL’s ability and research efforts to address pressing state needs,” he said.

At its initial meeting, the panel began developing a prioritized list of the state’s water research needs.

“Prioritizing will be extremely helpful,” said Lorrie Benson, WRRI deputy program manager. “The University wants to ensure it is addressing needs Nebraskans have identified as most critical.”

The 10 panel members, who will serve one- to three-year staggered terms, are:

Ann Bleed, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.	Don Kraus, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District.
Eugene Glock, Cedar Bell Farms.	Kirk Nelson, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.
Mary Harding, Nebraska Environmental Trust.	Lee Orton, Nebraska Well Drillers Association.
Glenn Johnson, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District.	Jay Rempe, Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation.
	Ed Schrock, Nebraska State Senator.
	Susan Seacrest, The Groundwater Foundation.